



## *News Release*

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### **This Holiday Season Be Practical - Give the Gift of Safety, Too**

*December, January & February are Deadliest Months for Fires*

**DECEMBER 10, 2004** - The Office of the State Fire Marshal reminds consumers that while shopping for that perfect gift, don't overlook the gifts that keep on giving throughout the year – home safety devices.

According to the State Fire Marshal, the top 10 days for home fires in recent years were all between December 24 and January 6.

"December, January and February are the deadliest months for fires and cooking and heating are the leading culprits," said Andy Neumann, State Fire Marshal. "Smoke alarms and fire extinguishers may not be exciting gifts to give, but these inexpensive gifts can provide a peace of mind that is priceless. So if you are looking for practical holiday presents, consider items that will protect your loved ones from fire this season."

Neumann added that consumers should be careful using candles since candle fires have nearly tripled in the past decade. Nearly twice as many home candle fires occur in December than any other month, perhaps because of holiday decorations and rituals.

Here are some items on the National Fire Protection Association's wish list for consumers:

- **Smoke alarms** are one of the best fire-safety items for the home. Seventy percent of all home fire fatalities occur in homes where there are no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. Consider smoke alarms for everyone on your list. Smoke alarms for people who are deaf or hard of hearing include strobe lights, high decibels and/or vibration. All smoke alarms should be replaced after 10 years.
- **Flashlights** can prevent fires by using flashlights instead of candles during power outages.
- **Sturdy candleholders** may prevent tip-over when candles are lit. Lantern-style candle holders can reduce the likelihood of something coming in contact with a candle flame.
- **A secure fireplace screen** will keep embers out of the room.
- **Long fireplace matches** to prevent burns.

(more)

- **Gift certificates for clean-up services** to remove fire-prone clutter from basements, attics or yards; or for chimney sweeps to prevent creosote build-up that can cause chimney fires.
- **A bathrobe with tight-fitting sleeves** that won't touch stove burners while a person is cooking.
- **Down or synthetic comforters, flannel sheets or flannel pajamas** to keep a loved one warm, and to reduce the need for space heaters, particularly at night. Generally, space heaters (fixed and portable) are involved in two-thirds of home heating fire deaths.
- **Large, deep, non-tip ashtrays** to prevent smoking materials from igniting materials nearby.
- **Portable fire extinguishers** with safety tips on how to use them. Make sure the recipient reads and understands the instructions before having to use them.
- **Fireproof oven mitts** for stove or barbecue.
- **Large house numbers** so firefighters can locate a home at night quickly during an emergency.
- **Carbon monoxide detectors** to alert loved ones of a silent killer: carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas formed when fuels-such as natural gas, oil, and wood burn incompletely. While a carbon monoxide detector won't help keep your loved ones safe from fire, it's something you should consider for home safety.
- **Stocking stuffers** to keep everyone safe. Download loads of fire safety information-including home escape grids-from NFPA's Web site, at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org), or for children, try NFPA's [www.sparky.org](http://www.sparky.org). And don't forget batteries for smoke alarms and flashlights!

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